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RUEHPW RUEHROV RUEHVK RUEHYG  
DE RUEHAH #0856/01 1911202  
ZNR UUUUU ZZH  
P 091202Z JUL 08  
FM AMEMBASSY ASHGABAT  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1115  
INFO RUCNCLS/ALL SOUTH AND CENTRAL ASIA COLLECTIVE  
RUCNCIS/CIS COLLECTIVE  
RUCNMEM/EU MEMBER STATES COLLECTIVE  
RUEHAK/AMEMBASSY ANKARA 3991  
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 1808  
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 1675  
RUEHIT/AMCONSUL ISTANBUL 2244  
RHMFIUU/CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC  
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC  
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC  
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC  
RUEHVEN/USMISSION USOSCE 2672

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 ASHGABAT 000856

SENSITIVE  
SIPDIS

STATE FOR SCA/CEN, ISN (BIGBEE)  
DOD FOR OSD-P (WEBER)

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [MASS](#) [TX](#)

SUBJECT: TURKMENISTAN: BTRP-CTR-GPP DISCUSS  
BIOSECURITY/BIOSAFETY

11. Sensitive but unclassified. Not for public internet.

12. (SBU) SUMMARY: On 16-17 June, Turkmenistan,s Ministry of Defense (MOD) and Ministry of Health and Medical Industry (MOHMI) received introductory presentations from a U.S./Canadian delegation on the Department of Defense,s Biological Threat Reduction Program (BTRP), the Department of State,s Biosecurity Engagement Program (BEP) under Cooperative Threat Reduction (CTR), and the Canadian Global Partnership Program (GPP). MOD and MOHMI responded positively to the delegation,s invitation to visit a biological lab in the region as well as attend the American Biological Safety Association (ABSA) Conference in October. END SUMMARY.

MILITARY DOCTORS INTERESTED IN PRACTICES OUTSIDE  
TURKMENISTAN

13. (SBU) The U.S./Canadian delegation consisting of Office of Secretary of Defense-Policy (OSD-P) Andrew Weber, Department of State International Security and Nonproliferation Bureau (DOS-ISN) Allison Bigbee, and Canadian Global Partnership (GPP) Maureen Ellis presented briefings on the BTRP, BEP, and GPP programs to explain the purpose of these efforts and to gauge Turkmenistan's level of readiness to expand cooperation on biosecurity and biosafety. MOD Medical Directorate Chief Colonel Oraz Dovlatov showed interest in the presentations and reciprocated with an overview of Turkmenistan,s military medical capability. Dovlatov said the military was able to screen its recruits and treat its soldiers. The most common infections observed were seasonal, acute respiratory illnesses in winter and stomach flu and other gastrointestinal illnesses in summer.

14. (SBU) Dovlatov expressed interest in learning about military medical practices outside of Turkmenistan and positively responded to an offer to visit other biological labs, adding that MOD was particularly interested in seeing other labs in the region as they would likely deal with similar strains and infections. MOD appeared willing to cooperate more fully in the medical field and accepted the

offer to attend the ABSA Conference in October in Reno, Nevada, as well as visit U.S. laboratories, but requested a formal invitation.

#### MINISTRY OF HEALTH SEEKS INCINERATORS

15. (SBU) MOHMI First Deputy Minister of Health and Chief Doctor for Epidemiology and Sanitation Annamurat Orazov showed interest in the delegation's presentations and responded with a surprisingly open discussion on Turkmenistan's plans to build up the medical capacity in the country, including new hospitals and labs. He noted that Turkmenistan sends human samples that are suspected to harbor infectious pathogens to the World Health Organization (WHO) reference laboratories for formal diagnosis. He emphasized the need to acquire incinerators capable of safely destroying liquid waste, as well as improving methods of disposing of biohazardous waste. Ellis discussed current technologies and that Orazov could meet with the makers of such equipment at the ABSA Conference in October. Orazov was interested in visiting other labs both in the region and in the U.S., as well as attending the ABSA Conference.

#### THE INTERNET LEADS TO A LAB

16. (SBU) The delegation then visited MOHMI's Experimental Industrial Centre of the Sanitary Epidemiological Station (SES). SES Director, Dr. Aman Iomudov, proudly presented an individual who had attended NAMRU-3-sponsored training on scientific techniques related to Avian Influenza

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diagnostics in Cairo. Iomudov also stressed his interest in receiving access to biosafety and biosecurity training opportunities for both technicians and higher-level management, as he himself had designed and built the SES's newest of several biological labs based only upon his internet research. Ellis, an expert on biological labs, praised the lab as well done, and emphasized that both the U.S. and Canadian programs can offer training opportunities as well as provide in-country expert support for future efforts.

17. (SBU) COMMENT: Turkmenistan officials displayed a willingness to cooperate more fully and in a way that would help develop the country's medical capabilities. Showing the signs of years of isolation, the MOD's continued desire to learn of international practices and MOHMI's plans to rebuild the health industry are encouraging. The SES director's resourcefulness and access to the Internet is encouraging, to say the least. The visit did not fulfill one of the delegation's primary objectives, which was to visit the Anti-Plague Installation (API), where the more dangerous pathogens are possibly kept. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which provided an escort for the entire visit, proved unable or unwilling to arrange the approved visit to the API. However, Turkmenistan likely wanted to show off the best lab that it had, and not a potentially sub-standard facility. END COMMENT.

HOAGLAND